GUTTER REPLACEMENT: A GUIDE

If you're getting stuck into some home improvements, guttering might not be the most exciting part of the process.

It could be tempting to focus time and money on home upgrades such as interior luxuries and upping the curb appeal. But getting your gutters right will repay you big time. Good gutters keep our ever-flowing British rain where it should be - and not in your house.

Let's have a look at signs you need gutter replacement, and what your best options are.

Detecting Dodgy Guttering

If your gutters are leaking water, your fascia will start rotting in no time. That can lead to water ingress and related damage - exactly what you don't want to mess up your interior finishes.

Clear signs that you need to consider gutter replacement include:

Visible Damage

If you can see from a quick visual inspection that you've got any of the following, you need to take action:

* Sagging gutters
* Broken joints
* Plants growing in the gutters
* Leaks
* Cracks/broken sections

If you're getting leaks, first of all, rule out clogging. It might be that your gutters are just full of leaves and muck, and that's causing the water to run over. It's a simple job for a professional cleaning company to come and clean them out, or you can have a go yourself.

Water Pooling

If your downpipes and spouts are not positioned correctly, water can accumulate rather than running away. It's best to position them away from the house. You can add extensions to direct the water exactly where it needs to go.

Gutters Angled Incorrectly

If rainwater is collecting in the gutters rather than running off, the angle may also be incorrect. Gutters need a gentle slope to allow the rainwater to flow correctly to the downpipe. If poorly installed, or damaged by leaves, the flow can be disrupted.

Doesn't Match Neighbour's Guttering

If you live in a semi or a terraced house, issues can occur where your guttering meets that of the house - or houses - next door.

If your neighbour has a new set, while yours is more of a vintage model, there can be compatibility issues at the join. Modern guttering is made to different dimensions.

If the joins are not well sealed, you might need your gutters replaced, at least at that section.

Gutter Replacement - How to Do It

If your gutters have had it, you have two options. You can get the professionals in or go the DIY route. In fact, this is one residential project that can be quite successfully handled by amateurs.

Signs You Should Get a Professional In

Although this can be an achievable home improvement project, some houses will need professional help. If you have a very complicated roof design, with lots of different levels and pitches, it's best to leave it to the professionals.

Also, be realistic about your own skills and experience. If you're a seasoned DIYer, then you will likely be able to tackle them. But if not, the consequences of getting it wrong could be disastrous.

Gutter Replacement - DIY Method

First things first, get the safe access for the job and research how to use it safely. Never take shortcuts with ladders - the consequences can be fatal. Check out the safety guide for the ladder you need for your job, and always maintain three points of contact while working.

Scaffolding is the most expensive but much safer. If possible, try to use scaffolding as an alternative to other access systems.

Work Out What You Need

Do a thorough inspection of the guttering and measure up what you need. Take photos to help and take detailed measurements of the parts you need to replace. This includes gutters, joining pieces and angled sections.

Standard half-round gutters are used on most houses. Guttering suppliers provide gutters and downpipes. They also supply angled sections, end caps and brackets that are fully compatible.

Remove Old Guttering

Plastic guttering is quite easy to take down - it can even be a one-person job. On the other hand, cast iron guttering is trickier, and you'll likely need an extra pair of hands.

Create a temporary support for the old guttering. To safely remove the guttering, you can use temporary supports, (if you are dealing with heavier guttering), beneath the guttering you are going to remove. Once in place, cut away the bolts supporting the old guttering.

Tie ropes around both ends of the guttering. Cut away the brackets and use the ropes to gently lower the section to the ground. Repeat for all sections of guttering.

Now you can move on to the downpipes. Start at the top and work your way down.

Repair the Fascia Boards

Check the fascia boards before you install the new guttering. Fill in the holes where you have removed the old brackets. If the boards are in poor condition, now's the time to replace them.

Install the New Guttering

Installation instructions will vary from manufacturer to manufacturer. This includes how the sections join and how far apart you need to space the brackets.

Start by fixing a gutter bracket at the opposite end of the guttering to the outlet. Tie a piece of string to it - this will allow you to check the slope.

Then position the gutter outlet over the drain, using a plumb line to check you have it in exactly the right place. Fix it in place.

Use the string to check there's a slight fall from the bracket to the outlet. Mark out and fit the rest of the brackets.

Fit the stop-end to the gutter and a union piece to the opposite end. Put it in place on the brackets and then fit the next length.

Carry on until you reach the final piece of guttering. Cut this down with a hacksaw and attach the final stop-end.

You can now attach the downpipe. Use a plumb line and spirit level to ensure a straight drop. Fix the brackets according to the manufacturer's directions.

Finally, fit the downpipe shoe. Make sure that it directs the water into the drain, with no overflow.

Everything You Need for Gutter Replacement

Now you know how to detect guttering that needs to be replaced. You know what types can and can't be done by a DIYer. And you've got a guide to gutter replacement. Now all you need are the gutters and fixings!

At SCP Building Products, we stock high-quality guttering and fixings. We've got everything you need for your home upgrades, and our friendly staff are always ready to help and give advice.